

DECEMBER 8, 1998

In-Home Services

California law requires all barbering, cosmetology (including skin care and nailcare), and electrolysis services administered for compensation to be performed by a California-licensed operator in a licensed establishment, or by a student in an approved school. However, the law allows licensees from licensed establishments to provide **in-home** services in cases where illness or other physical or mental incapacitation prevents the customer from visiting the establishment. (In-home services also include those performed at convalescent hospitals and other group homes.)

If you are ill or physically or mentally incapacitated and need in-home services, call your operator at the establishment. Explain the situation and ask if your operator or any other licensee working there would be available to provide in-home services. Your appointment will then be logged in the establishment's official appointment book. Licensees providing in-home services must follow the Barbering and Cosmetology Program's health and safety laws and regulations.

Before Accepting Service

Before you accept in-home barbering, cosmetology, or electrology services, be sure that the operator is in compliance with the following guidelines:

1. The establishment and the operator must have valid licenses issued by the Barbering and Cosmetology Program (or, prior to July 1, 1997, the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology) and must follow the Program's health and safety guidelines.
2. The operator must use clean working instruments and towels and maintain a clean work area. The operator should never use the same tools on you that were used on someone else without first disinfecting them. If an item cannot be disinfected (such as a nail buffer

block or an emery board), it must be thrown away immediately after use. The disinfection process includes washing tools with soap and water and then totally immersing them in a disinfectant registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. If a clean set of tools is not available for use on you, **DO NOT** allow the operator to perform the service. Improper disinfection of tools, implements, and towels can spread disease and bacteria from one person to another. (A prime example would be the spread of nail fungus during a manicure or pedicure.) *NOTE: You have every right to ask the operator to explain the disinfection procedures before a service begins. Various viruses, including HIV and Hepatitis B, can be transmitted through the use of dirty instruments. Don't risk your health! If the disinfection procedure doesn't sound adequate, **refuse** the service.)*

3. Electrolysis needles and tweezers must be sterilized before use on each client by either a steam or dry heat sterilizer that is registered and listed with the federal Food and Drug Administration.
4. In addition to disinfecting tools and instruments, operators are required to wash their hands between clients. Before beginning nail care services, operators should also ask their *clients* to wash their hands.

Talk with the operator before the service begins so that you both have an understanding of the desired results. Be honest. If you have used hair color or other chemicals on your hair, tell the operator. If you have had problems in the past with artificial nails, tell the manicurist. Tell the operator about any health conditions and medications you are taking, since this could affect the outcome of the service.

When you pay for the service, be sure to get a receipt. If something goes wrong and you must file a complaint, the receipt will help prove that you received the service.

Illegal Instruments & Techniques

It is illegal for California-licensed individuals to use certain instruments, such as "Credo" blades (tools fitted with razor blades), "cheese grater" type instruments, or scalpel-type blades, to remove dead skin or shave calluses during manicures or pedicures. Licensees are also prohibited from using needle-like instruments, such as lancets, to extract skin blemishes or to perform similar procedures. They may not administer or apply any medication, and should **never** cut the skin or treat in-grown toenails, corns, or other medical conditions. This is particularly dangerous for persons with diabetes or circulatory problems because serious injuries could result. Such acts, and any other services that affect the structure or function of living tissue of the face or body, are considered invasive procedures and should be performed only by medical professionals or by the clients themselves. **Remember, services performed by licensed operators should not hurt.**

Patients in Convalescent Homes

If you are arranging in-home barbering, cosmetology, or electrology services for someone in a convalescent home or skilled nursing facility, be sure to follow the guidelines in this fact sheet. Make an appointment with a licensed individual from a licensed establishment, and do not accept service from anyone who does not follow state health and safety guidelines. It is particularly important to tell the operator what medications the client is taking and the client's disabilities or special needs. If the client has difficulty communicating or is limited in other ways, you may wish to stay nearby during the service. **NEVER** ask the

licensee to treat medical conditions such as in-grown toenails or corns. These should be treated by medical personnel only.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the services of a barber, cosmetologist, or electrologist, discuss your concerns with the operator, or call the manager or owner of the establishment. Many complaints can be quickly resolved this way.

If you are injured by any Program licensee, discuss what happened with the operator and establishment owner. Take photographs of the injury and have another professional look at it to provide independent confirmation. Seek medical attention if necessary, and file a complaint with the Program at the address below.

If you feel that a barber, cosmetologist, manicurist, esthetician, or electrologist has violated state health and safety guidelines, file a complaint with the **Department of Consumer Affairs Barbering and Cosmetology Program at 400 R Street, Suite 4080, Sacramento, CA 95814-6237**. Program representatives will review your complaint and determine the appropriate course of action to resolve the issue and/or obtain compliance with the laws and regulations. You can also file a complaint to report unlicensed activity, false advertising, or fraud. You may file a complaint anonymously.

More information about the Program, as well as a complaint form, is available on the Program's website at **www.dca.ca.gov/barber**.